

4. FINDINGS—INCIDENCE OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF THE ELDERLY

Chapter Four presents the findings of the National Elder Abuse Incidence Study (NEAIS). First, the numbers of reports of abuse, neglect, and self-neglect of elders over 60 that are not reported are compared with those that are reported to official agencies. Two national incidence estimates of abuse and neglect of elders 60 years and older in domestic settings in 1996 are then calculated—one without self-neglect and one with self-neglect included. Then, characteristics of victims, reporters and perpetrators known to Adult Protective Services (APS) agencies are described. Abuse reported by sentinel agencies is presented next, with a focus on the characteristics of elderly victims and perpetrators.

4.1 Comparison of Reported and Unreported Abuse and Neglect and Calculation of National Estimates of the Incidence of Abuse and Neglect During 1996

Table 4-1 provides important data for calculating the national incidence of domestic abuse, neglect, and self-neglect of elderly people in the continental United States in 1996 (Hawaii, Alaska, and the U.S. territories were not included in the study). Numbers represent new unduplicated reports to agency sentinels (column one) and to APS agencies (column two) during 1996. Column three is the number of those reports to APS agencies that were substantiated after an investigation. Column four is the sum of columns one and three. Standard errors, representing 95 percent confidence intervals, are shown in parentheses for all figures. The standard errors of the estimates for APS agencies are relatively low because of the large number of actual reports received by those agencies (1,466), while the standard errors for the sentinel data are relatively large because of the smaller number of actual reports (140 after duplicates were removed).

If a report on the same individual was obtained from both an APS agency and from a sentinel, the case was included in the APS total, but not in the sentinel totals. Consequently, the numbers shown in the table in column one represent only those individuals reported uniquely by sentinel agencies. The term “incident” is also used and represents a report for only one individual for the calendar year, regardless of how many times other episodes of abuse were reported for that person. Typically, APS data include more than one report during a year for some victims. Since the numbers routinely reported by the states for the APS agencies within their boundaries do not represent individuals, total counts of abuse and

neglect based on such data will be higher than the unduplicated estimates presented in this report. Because there is no duplication in the NEAIS data, the terms “incident” and “elder” are used interchangeably.

Table 4-1. National estimates of the incidence of abuse, neglect, and self-neglect of persons 60 years and older, 1996 (unduplicated)

	Estimated Number of Elderly ¹			(4) Total: Columns (1) and (3)
	(1) Reported by Sentinels	(2) Reported to APS	(3) Reported to APS: Substantiated Only	
Total Abuse, Neglect and Self Neglect (Standard error)	435,901 (114,887)	236,479 (34,298)	115,110 (20,326) 48.7%	551,011 (118,008)
Total Abuse and Neglect (Standard error)	378,982 (117,758)	151,408 (18,999)	70,942 (11,881) 46.9%	449,924 (119,512)
Abuse (Standard error)	355,218 (116,875)	95,761 (15,579)	47,069 (9,814) 49.2%	402,287 (116,084)
Neglect ² (Standard error)	147,035 (52,290)	85,143 (12,966)	35,333 (6,706) 41.5%	182,368 (58,743)
Self-Neglect (Standard error)	81,635 (21,966)	113,573 (28,907)	57,345 (15,350) 50.5%	138,980 (24,232)

¹ Subtotals do not add to totals because more than one type of abuse was reported for some cases.

² Includes abandonment.

To arrive at the most accurate estimate of the national incidence of elder abuse and neglect in 1996, researchers added two numbers: reports submitted to APS agencies and substantiated by those agencies [column 3], and reports made by sentinels and presumed to be substantiated [column 1]. Sentinel reports are treated as substantiated incidents for three reasons. First, the sentinels were selected because they had frequent daily contact with the elderly and had the ability to identify abuse if they encountered it. Second, the sentinels were trained carefully to carry out this role in a rigorous manner, including having an “800” telephone contact to call with any questions about client eligibility or data

collection. The third reason is that only those incidents the sentinels believed met the definition of elder abuse and neglect were reported. In contrast, APS agencies receive reports from any and all sources, all of which must be investigated and many of which are not substantiated.

Two separate incidence estimates are calculated—one without self-neglect and one with self-neglect included:

Estimated Incidence of Elder Abuse and/or Neglect in 1996

The best national estimate is that a total of 449,924 elderly persons, aged 60 and over, experienced abuse and/or neglect in domestic settings in 1996. Of this total, 70,942 (16 percent) were reported to and substantiated by APS agencies, but the remaining 378,982 (84 percent) were not reported to APS. From these figures, one can conclude that over five times (5.3) as many new incidents of abuse and neglect were unreported than those that were reported to and substantiated by APS agencies in 1996. The standard error suggests that nationwide as many as 688,948 elders or as few as 210,900 elders could have been victims of abuse and/or neglect in domestic settings in 1996. This range indicates that between 1.7 and 9.0 times as many elders were abused and neglected and not reported to APS agencies as were reported to and substantiated by APS agencies.

Estimated Incidence of Elder Abuse, Neglect, and/or Self-Neglect in 1996

The best national estimate is that a total of 551,011 elderly persons, aged 60 and over, experienced abuse, neglect, and/or self-neglect in domestic settings in 1996. Of this total, 115,110 (21 percent) were reported to and substantiated by APS agencies, with the remaining 435,901 (79 percent) not being reported to APS agencies. One can conclude from these figures that almost four times (3.8) as many new incidents of elder abuse, neglect, and/or self-neglect were unreported than those that were reported to and substantiated by APS agencies in 1996. The standard error suggests that nationwide as many as 787,027 elders or as few as 314,995 elders could have been abused, neglected, and/or self-neglecting in domestic settings in 1996. This range indicates that between 1.4 and 6.2 times as many elders were abused, neglected, and/or self-neglecting and not reported to APS as were reported to and substantiated by APS agencies.

Table 4-1 also shows the incidence of abuse and neglect by category: abuse only, including physical, sexual, emotional, and financial; neglect by caretakers (including abandonment); and self-neglect. More than three times as many incidents of abuse were observed by sentinels as were reported to APS. Self-neglect, on the other hand, was more commonly reported to APS agencies, at a rate of 1.4 to 1. Nearly one-half of all the incidents reported to APS (48.7%) were substantiated overall. Cases of neglect were somewhat less likely to be substantiated than other forms of abuse or neglect (41.5%).

Please note: Throughout the following discussion of the NEAIS findings, there is frequent reference to “confidence bands,” as described on pages 3-37 and 38 of this report. This is an important and appropriate way of communicating information to the reader about the degree of certainty for specific data findings. While asterisks (*) are used in the tables included in this chapter to signify wide confidence bands, the actual numerical standard errors for all data elements for each table are included in Appendix M.

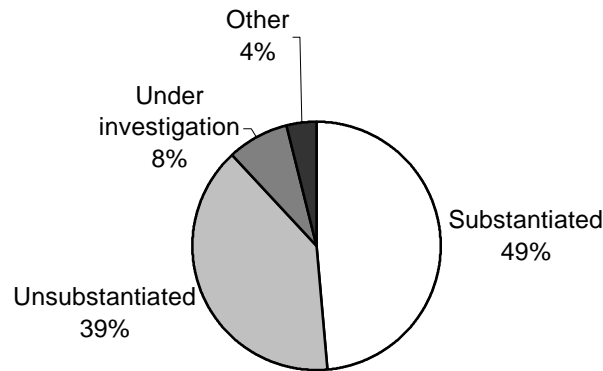
4.2 Abuse Reported by APS Agencies

Outcomes of Investigations

As noted above, the total (unduplicated) estimated number of domestic elder abuse, neglect, and/or self-neglect reports investigated by APS agencies during 1996, nationwide, was 236,479. Each APS agency utilized the investigation process and criteria already in place in that state for determining whether a report was substantiated. Of these total reports, 115,110 (or nearly one-half – 48.7 percent) were substantiated after investigations, while almost another two-fifths (39.3 percent) were unsubstantiated, as shown in Figure 4-1 on the next page. In addition, nearly one-tenth (8.2 percent) of the reports were still under investigation at the end of 1996, and a small portion of the reports (3.8 percent) had other outcomes (e.g., the alleged victim died, refused an investigation, could not be located, or had moved out of the area).

It should be noted that an APS agency’s determination of non-substantiation of a report of suspected abuse or neglect does not conclusively mean that abuse or neglect did *not* happen. Rather an unsubstantiated report can mean that the level of proof required by that state was not sufficiently met, despite indications that abuse or neglect *may have occurred* (e.g., there is a reason to suspect abuse or neglect).

Figure 4-1. Outcomes of APS investigations of domestic elder abuse, neglect, and self-neglect ¹

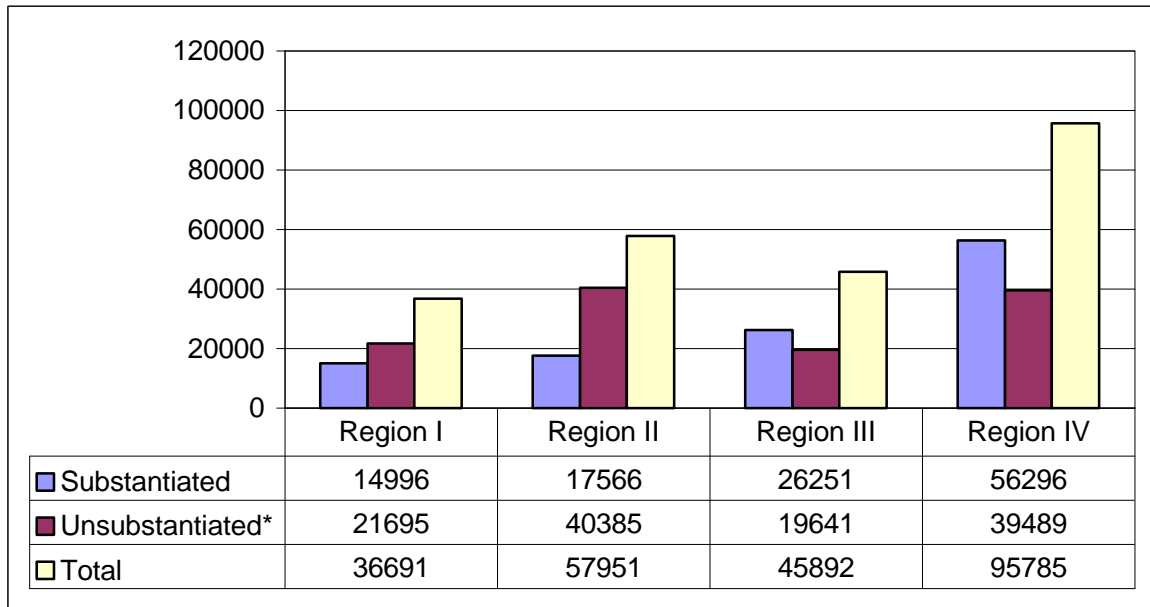


Outcomes	Estimated number of reports
Substantiated	115,110
Unsubstantiated	92,796
Still under investigation	19,440
Other	8,976
Total	236,322

¹ Unduplicated estimate of elderly victims reported to APS agencies, 1996.

Figure 4-2 shows substantiated and unsubstantiated reports by Office of Business Economics (OBE) Region. The largest number of incidents was reported in Region IV, the Western United States. A total of 95,875 incidents (weighted and annualized), or 40 percent of the national total, were supplied by APS agencies from this region. The West also had the highest rate of substantiation, 58.8 percent. Region III, the Central United States, had the next highest proportion of substantiated incidents (57.2 percent). Region II, in the Southeast, had the lowest substantiation rate of the four regions, 30.3 percent. Keeping in mind that these regions are equal in total population, the West clearly leads the other areas of the country on a per capita basis in total reports of elder abuse and neglect and rates of substantiation. This may be due to a heightened awareness of elder abuse in this part of the country and this possibility warrants further study.

Figure 4-2. Substantiated and unsubstantiated reports to APS/aging agencies by OBE region



*Includes cases under investigation and other cases with undetermined outcomes.

Substantiated Reports of Abuse by Others

As shown in Table 4-2, nearly one-half of substantiated reported incidents (48.7 percent) involved neglect, while slightly more than one-third (35.4 percent) were concerned with emotional/psychological abuse. Next, financial/material exploitation accounted for somewhat less than one-third (30.2 percent) of all substantiated reports. Approximately one-fourth (25.6%) of substantiated reports involved physical abuse. Findings on abandonment (3.6 percent), sexual abuse (0.3 percent), and other types of maltreatment (1.4 percent) had wide confidence bands.

Table 4-2. Types of elder maltreatment substantiated by APS agencies.

Maltreatment	Number of Reports	Percentages ¹
Neglect	34,525	(48.7%)
Emotional/psychological abuse	25,142	(35.4%)
Financial/material exploitation	21,427	(30.2%)
Physical abuse	18,144	(25.6%)
Abandonment	2,560*	(3.6%)
Sexual abuse	219*	(0.3%)
Other	994*	(1.4%)
Total incidents	70,942**	

¹ Estimated number of substantiated reports of domestic elder abuse with each type of maltreatment, 1996. Cases of self-neglect only are excluded.

* The confidence band for this number is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

** Total incidents do not equal totals across abuse categories because more than one substantiated type of abuse was often reported for an incident.

Reporters of Substantiated Abuse by Others

As presented in Table 4-3, family members of victims reported one-fifth (20.0 percent) of the 70,942 substantiated reports of domestic elder abuse and neglect in 1996. Hospitals (17.3 percent) and police/sheriff's departments (11.3 percent) followed. In addition, in-home service providers (9.6 percent), friends/neighbors (9.1 percent), victims (8.8 percent), and physicians, nurses, and clinics (8.4 percent) each accounted for slightly less than one-tenth of the substantiated domestic elder abuse reports where elders were abused by perpetrators. Further, banks (0.4 percent) and public health departments

(0.1 percent) were responsible for small percentages of the substantiated reports, but the numbers of their reports are negligible and may not be much greater than zero.

Table 4-3. Reporters of substantiated abuse by others

Reporter	Number of reports (percentage) ¹		Reporter	Number of reports (percentage) ¹	
Family members	14,169	(20.0%)	Physician, nurse, clinic	5,925	(8.4%)
Hospital	12,290	(17.3%)	Out-of-home service provider	3,716	(5.2%)
Police/sheriff	8,031	(11.3%)	Bank	305*	(0.4%)
In-home service Provider	6,816	(9.6%)	Public health department	35*	(0.1%)
Friend/neighbor	6,476	(9.1%)	Other	10,729	(15.1%)
Victim	6,216	(8.8%)			
			Total	70,942**	

¹ Estimated number of substantiated elder abuse reports, by type of reporter 1996. Cases of self-neglect only are excluded.

* The confidence band for this number is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

** Respondents recorded one or more reporters for each incident.

Reporters of Substantiated Reports of Self-Neglect

As shown in Table 4-4, hospitals (19.8 percent) and friends/neighbors (19.1 percent) were the most frequent reporters of the substantiated reports of self-neglect in 1996, followed by police/sheriff's department (11.7 percent), and family members (6.5 percent). Other reporters, who account for 26.5 percent, involved a long list including churches, apartment managers, fire departments, landlords, residential facilities, utility companies, and anonymous reporters. (Some incidents were reported by more than one reporter.)

Table 4-4. Reporters of substantiated reports of self-neglect¹

Reporter	Number of reports (percentage)		Reporter	Number of reports (percentage)	
Hospital	8,727	(19.8%)	Out-of-home service provider	3,431*	(7.8%)
Friend/neighbor	8,433	(19.1%)	Victim	624*	(1.4%)
Police/sheriff	5,152	(11.7%)	Bank	247*	(0.6%)
Family member	2,877	(6.5%)	Public health department	0*	(0.0%)
In-home service Provider	5,435*	(12.3%)	Other	11,685	(26.5%)
Physician, nurse, clinic	5,076*	(11.5%)			
			Total	44,168**	

¹ Estimated number of substantiated incidents of self-neglect by type of reporter.

* The confidence band for this number is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

** Total number of substantiated incidents of self-neglect includes one or more reports by type of reporter.

Three Most Frequent Reporters for Each Maltreatment Type

The three most frequent reporters for each type of substantiated maltreatment with perpetrators (i.e., excluding self-neglect) are shown in Table 4-5.

Table 4-5. Three most frequent reporters for each maltreatment type¹

Reporter	Neglect	Emotional/ Psychological	Financial/ material	Physical	Abandonment	Sexual abuse
Family member	24.3%		14.0%			
Hospital	16.1%	17.9%	14.2%	11.8%	56.2%*	
Friend/neighbor	14.1%*		15.0%		12.4%*	
Victim		17.8%				
In-home service		16.9%*		23.9%		100.0%
Police/sheriff				24.3%		
Physician, nurse, clinic					17.6%*	

¹ This table is based on estimated 70,942 substantiated reports of domestic elder abuse, where perpetrators maltreated elders in 1996. The substantiated reports of self-neglect are not included.

* The confidence band for this number is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Neglect. Family members (24.3 percent), hospitals (16.1 percent), and friends/neighbors (14.1 percent) together accounted for more than half of the reports of neglect substantiated in 1996.

Emotional/psychological abuse. Hospitals (17.9 percent), victims (17.8 percent), and in-home service providers (16.9 percent) were the three most frequent reporters of substantiated emotional/psychological abuse.

Financial/material exploitation. Friends/neighbors (15.0 percent), hospitals (14.2 percent), and family members (14.0 percent) were the three most frequent reporters of substantiated financial/material exploitation.

Physical abuse. Police/sheriff's departments (24.3 percent), in-home service providers (23.9 percent), and hospitals (11.8 percent) were the most frequent reporters of the substantiated reports of physical abuse.

Abandonment. Hospitals alone accounted for 56.2 percent of the substantiated reports of abandonment. In addition, physicians, nurses, and clinics (17.6 percent) and friends/neighbors (12.4 percent) constituted the second and third most frequent reporters of the substantiated reports of abandonment, respectively.

Sexual abuse. In-home service providers reported all of the substantiated reports of sexual abuse.

Outcomes of Investigations for Different Types of Maltreatment

As noted earlier, the overall substantiation rate of domestic elder abuse and neglect reports was 48.7 percent in 1996. Table 4-6 on the next page presents the outcomes of investigations for different types of maltreatment. As the table shows, slightly more than three-fifths (61.9 percent) of the reports of physical abuse were substantiated after investigations, and this type of maltreatment marked the highest substantiation rate. Abandonment recorded the second highest substantiated rate, with somewhat over one-half (56.0 percent) of the reports of abandonment substantiated. Emotional/psychological abuse followed closely with the third highest substantiation rate (54.1 percent). Next, financial/material exploitation (44.5 percent) and neglect (41 percent) shared similar substantiation rates. The "other" category includes persons with unclassified abuse, some of whom died.

Table 4-6. Outcomes of investigations for different types of maltreatment¹

Maltreatment type	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Still under Investigation	Other
Physical abuse	61.9%	33.6%	3.9%*	0.5%*
Abandonment	56.0%	36.8%	4.5%*	2.7%*
Emotional/psychological	54.1%	31.6%	12.9%	1.4%*
Financial/material	44.5%	35.8%	13.4%	6.3%*
Neglect	41.0%	44.6%	7.7%	6.1%
Sexual abuse	7.4%*	84.8%*	0.0%	7.8%*
Other	89.0%	11.0%	0.0%	0.0%

¹ Based on estimated 151,408 weighted reports of "abuse by others" category.

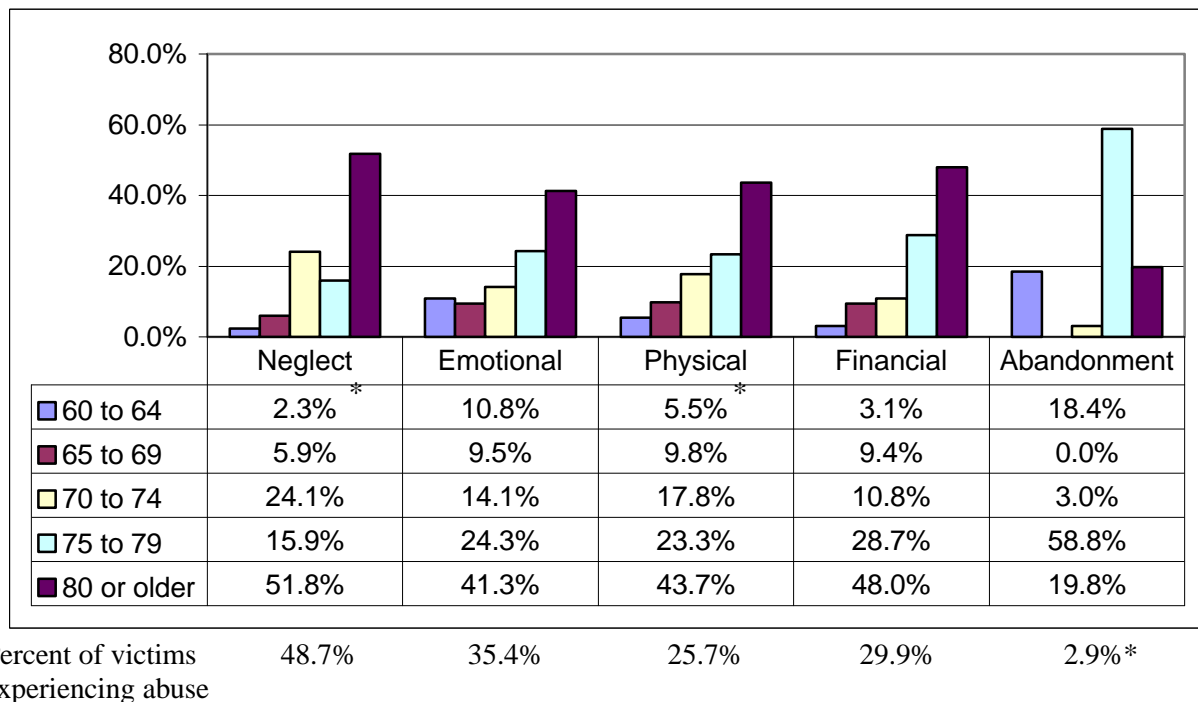
* The confidence band for this number is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

4.3 Characteristics of Elderly Victims, Reported to APS

Ages of Elder Abuse Victims for Selected Types of Maltreatment

An analysis of substantiated reports of domestic elder abuse (where perpetrators were present) reveals information about the ages of victims of different types of maltreatment as shown in Figure 4-3. Nationwide in 1996, approximately 23% of elders 60 and over were age 60-64. This proportion declines gradually in each 5-year interval until ages 85+, representing only 8.5 percent of elders.

Figure 4.3 Ages of elder abuse victims for selected types of maltreatment¹



¹Based on estimated 70,556 substantiated incidents of elder abuse. Some entries have missing values

* The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Neglect. More than one-half (51.8 percent) of the victims of neglect were 80 years of age and older in 1996, while almost one-fourth (24.1 percent) were between 70 and 74 years of age. Next, those who were between 75 and 79 years of age and those who were between 65 and 69 years of age accounted for 15.9 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively. Only 2.3 percent of neglect victims were between 60 and 64 years of age, but this has a wide confidence band.

Emotional/psychological abuse. Like neglect, the largest age group of victims of emotional/psychological abuse was elders who were 80 years of age and older (41.3 percent). In addition, almost one-fourth of the victims (24.3 percent) were between 75 and 79 years of age, and another one-seventh (14.1 percent) were between 70 and 74. Next, two other age groups each accounted for approximately one-tenth of the victims, as follows: the 60 to 64 group (10.8 percent) and the 65 to 69 group (9.5 percent).

Physical abuse. More than two-fifths (43.7 percent) of the victims of physical abuse were 80 years of age and older, while somewhat less than one-fourth (23.3 percent) were between 75 and 79 years of age. In addition, those who were between 70 and 74 and between 65 and 69 accounted for 17.8 percent and 9.8 percent, respectively. Only 5.5 percent of physical abuse victims were between 60 and 64 years old, but this has a wide confidence band.

Financial/material exploitation. Nearly one-half (48.0 percent) of the victims of financial/material exploitation were 80 years of age and older, while another 28.7 percent were between 75 and 79 years of age. Next, the elderly victims between 70 and 74 years of age and those between 65 and 69 accounted for 10.8 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively. Victims between 60 and 64 years old accounted for 3.1 percent of financial/material exploitation.

Abandonment. The victims of abandonment appear to be somewhat younger than the victims of other types of maltreatment, as the percentages in the table show; however, because most of these analytical findings have wide confidence bands it is not possible to confirm what the table suggests.

Incomes of Elder Abuse Victims

The APS data form asked for an estimate of the income of the maltreated elder and spouse (if any). For 71 percent of the elders, the APS worker was able to make this estimate, while in 29 percent of the reports, the worker was not able to do so. Due to the sensitivity of the issue and the focus on recording other important information, the APS worker did not attempt to gather additional information on income from other sources. An analysis of 53,667 substantiated reports of domestic elder abuse (excluding reports of self-neglect), for which income information was available, was performed. The data are shown in Table 4-7.

Table 4-7. Incomes of elder abuse victims for selected types of maltreatment¹

Income category	Neglect	Emotional/ psychological	Physical abuse	Financial/ material	Abandonment
Less than \$5,000	2.4%*	6.2%*	7.6%*	1.9%*	0.0%
\$5,000-\$9,999	66.8%	37.8%	49.5%	46.0%	96.1%
\$10,000-\$14,999	21.4%	31.0%	18.5%*	29.8%	3.9%*
15,000 and up	9.5%	25.0%	24.5%*	22.4%	0.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of victims experiencing abuse	51.8%	34.9%	23.9%	30.7%	3.5%*

¹ Based on an estimated 53,667 substantiated incidents of elder abuse. Income was missing for 28.8 percent of reports.

* The confidence band for this number is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Neglect. Two-thirds (66.8 percent) of the victims of neglect had annual incomes that were between \$5,000 and \$9,999, and another slightly more than one-fifth (21.4 percent) had annual incomes that fell between \$10,000 and \$14,999. In addition, the annual incomes of nearly one-tenth (9.5 percent) of neglect victims were \$15,000 or higher.

Emotional/psychological abuse. Somewhat less than two-fifths (37.8 percent) of the victims had incomes that were between \$5,000 and \$9,999, while nearly one-third (31.0 percent) were those whose incomes fell between \$10,000 and \$14,999. In addition, exactly one-fourth (25.0 percent) of

the victims of emotional/psychological abuse had incomes of \$15,000 or more. All of these findings were statistically significant.

Physical abuse. Like the victims of neglect and emotional/psychological abuse, the largest portion (49.5 percent) of physical abuse victims had incomes between \$5,000 and \$9,999. All other findings on victims' incomes in this maltreatment category had wide confidence bands.

Financial/material exploitation. Nearly one-half (46.0 percent) of the elder victims had incomes between \$5,000 and \$9,999, while almost one-third (29.8 percent) were those whose incomes fell between \$10,000 and \$14,999. In addition, slightly more than one-fifth (22.4 percent) of financial/material exploitation victims had incomes that were \$15,000 or more.

Abandonment. Almost all victims (96.1 percent) of abandonment had incomes that were between \$5,000 and \$9,999, and this finding was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Sex of Elder Abuse Victims

Nationwide, females comprised 57.6 percent of the elderly population over 60 years old in 1996; males were 42.4 percent. Consequently, percentages of females over 58% in any category may indicate that they are over represented; lower proportions do not.¹

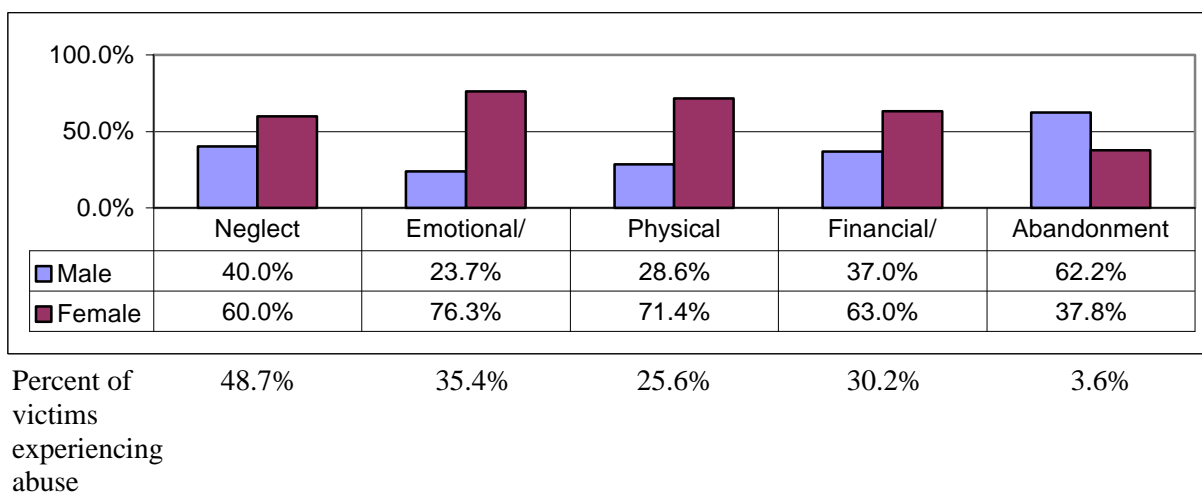
Neglect was the most frequent type of maltreatment, affecting 48.7 percent of all victims of elder abuse, as presented in Figure 4-4. More than one-half (60.0 percent) of the victims of neglect were female elders, while the remaining neglect victims (40.0 percent) were male elders. Next, emotional/psychological abuse was the second most frequent type, with 35.4 percent of the victims. Data show that about three-quarters (76.3 percent) of the victims of this type of maltreatment were female elders, while the remaining 23.7 percent were male elders. Emotional abuse is the category of abuse in which women are most heavily over-represented compared to their portion of the total elderly population (76.3 vs. 57.6 percent).

¹ Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population Paper Listing 57.

Financial/material exploitation was the third most frequent type involving 30.2 percent of the victims. Female elders were victims of financial/material exploitation somewhat more than their proportion of the elder population (63.0 percent vs. 57.6 percent), while male elders were victims of exploitation 37.0 percent of the time. Physical abuse was the fourth most frequent type of elder maltreatment, accounting for 25.6 percent of all victims. Over two-thirds (71.4 percent) of the victims of physical abuse were female elders, while the remaining one-third (28.6 percent) were male elders. Physical abuse is the second category in which women are most over represented as victims compared to overall population statistics (71.4 vs. 57.6 percent).

Abandonment only accounted for 3.6 percent of all victims of abuse, but men were disproportionally represented compared with their proportion of the elderly population (62.2 vs. 42.4 percent).

Figure 4-4. Sex of elder abuse victims for selected types of maltreatment



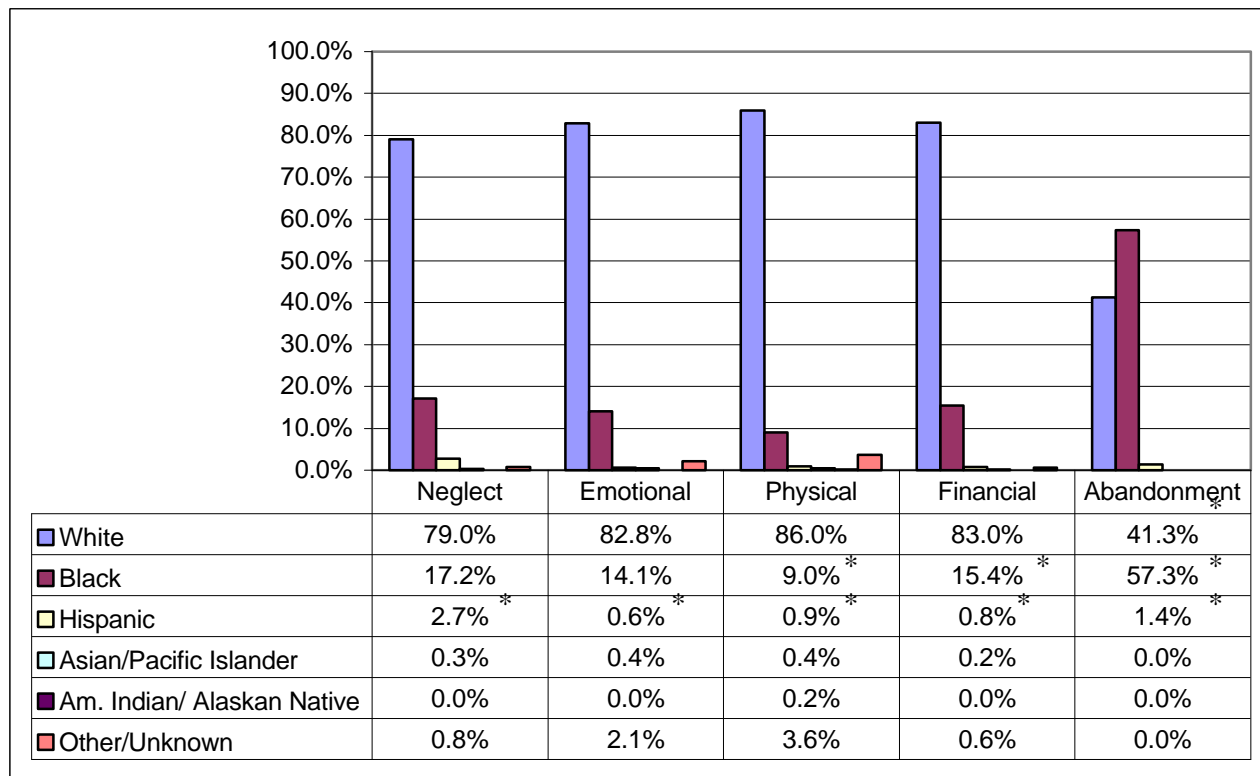
Race/Ethnicity of Elder Abuse Victims

Figure 4-5 on the next page presents the race/ethnicity of elder abuse victims for selected types of maltreatment. Nationwide in 1996 among those 60 and older, 84 percent were White, 8.3 percent were Black, 5.1 percent were Hispanic, 2.1 percent were Asian or Pacific Islander, and 0.4 percent were

American Indian or Alaskan Natives. White elders account for 79.0 percent of the victims of neglect, which was the most frequent type of maltreatment, affecting 48.7 percent of all abuse victims. Black elders accounted for 17.2 percent of neglect victims. Elders from other racial/ethnic groups, however, were underrepresented among the victims of neglect, as shown in Figure 4-5. Emotional/psychological abuse was the second most frequent type of maltreatment, with 35.5 percent of victims. Over four-fifths (82.8 percent) of the victims of this type of maltreatment were white elders, while 14.1 percent were black. Physical abuse was the third most frequent type of elder maltreatment, with 25.6 percent of abuse victims. White elders represented 86.0 percent of victims of physical abuse, while black elders comprised approximately 9.0 percent. Elders from other racial/ethnic categories were underrepresented.

Financial/material exploitation was the fourth most frequent type of maltreatment, with 30.2 percent of all elder abuse victims. The proportion of white victims of this type of elder maltreatment was 83.0 percent. Black elders comprised 15.4 percent of abuse victims of this type. Again, elders from other racial/ethnic groups were underrepresented among victims. Abandonment accounted for only 3.6 percent of all victims of elder abuse. Interestingly, the percentages of white victims (41.3 percent) and black victims (57.3 percent) for this type of abuse were very close, but with the black population significantly over-represented than its proportion of the elderly population (8.3 percent). In addition, abandonment was the only type of abuse for which the racial/ethnic breakdown data had wide confidence bands in every category.

Figure 4-5. Race/ethnicity of elder abuse victims for selected types of maltreatment



Percent of victims
experiencing abuse

48.6%

35.5%

25.6%

30.2%

3.6%

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Physical and Mental Frailty

Elderly people with physical and mental frailties are more likely to be vulnerable to abusive behavior. Nationwide, approximately 15 percent of older people are depressed at any one time; 10 percent suffer from some form of dementia, and approximately 14 percent have difficulties with one or more activities of daily living.² While rates of depression remain fairly stable across the adult life span, physical and mental frailties increase, especially among those over the age of 85. It has long been suspected that these impairments are more common among elders who are victims of abuse and neglect, although no such estimates are available. The NEAIS obtained estimates of these frailty measures.

Self-Care Ability. The data suggest that a large proportion—about three out of four--of elder abuse and neglect victims suffer from physical frailty. Approximately one half (47.9 percent) of the substantiated incidents of abuse and neglect involved elderly persons who were not physically able to care for themselves. Another 28.7 percent of elders were only somewhat able to care for themselves, while only about one in five (22.9 percent) elders were judged able to care for themselves, as shown below.

Table 4-8. Ability to Care for Self Physically (APS)¹

Characteristics of Maltreated Elders	Number of Estimated Reports	Percentage
Not Able to Care for Self	34,009	47.9
Somewhat Able to Care for Self	20,380	28.7
Able to Care for Self	16,259	22.9
Don't Know, Cannot Determine	294*	0.4*

¹Based on an estimated 70,942 substantiated cases of abuse, excluding self-neglecting elders.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Confusion. Six out of 10 elder abuse victims experienced some degree of confusion, which represents a high degree of mental impairment among this group of elders. Approximately one third (31.6 percent) of these elders were very confused or disoriented. Another more than one quarter (27.9 percent) was sometimes confused, while 38.7 percent were not confused, as shown in Table 4-9 on the next page.

² Disability in the United States: Prevalence and causes, 1992, U.S. Department of Education Cases and Rehabilitative Services, July 1996, Table 3, p.75; and U.S. Census Bureau Report on Disability Status of Persons 65 Years and Older in 1994-95, November 1997.

Table 4-9. Confusion (APS)¹

Characteristics of Maltreated Elders	Number of Estimated Reports	Percentage
Not Confused	27,425	38.7
Sometimes Confused	19,820	27.9
Very Confused, Disoriented	22,417	31.6
Don't Know, Cannot Determine	1,279*	1.8*

¹Based on an estimated 70,942 substantiated cases of abuse, excluding self-neglecting elders.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Depression. The data on depression among victims of abuse and neglect are less conclusive, but do suggest a somewhat smaller problem than self-care ability and confusion. In 21.1 percent of the incidents of substantiated elder abuse and neglect, the APS agency was not able to determine whether depression was present or not. About 45 percent of the total group had some degree of depression (6.3 percent severe and 37.3 percent moderate) and about one third (35.4 percent) were not depressed.

Table 4-10 Depression (APS)¹

Characteristics of Maltreated Elders	Number of Estimated Reports	Percentage
Not Depressed	25,051	35.4
Moderate Depression	26,407	37.3
Severe Depression	4,424	6.3
Don't Know, Cannot Determine	14,915	21.1

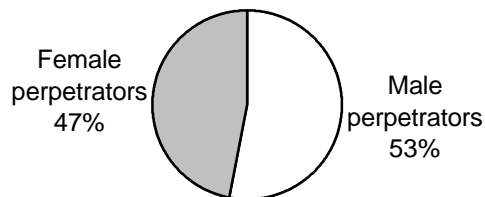
¹Based on an estimated 70,797 substantiated cases of abuse, excluding self-neglecting elders.

4.3.1 Characteristics of Perpetrators of Domestic Elder Abuse

Sex of Perpetrators of Elder Abuse

An analysis of the substantiated incidents of elder abuse reveals that 52.5 percent of the incidents involved male perpetrators, while the remaining 47.5 percent were female perpetrators, as shown below in Figure 4-6:

Figure 4-6. Sex of perpetrators of elder abuse



Total: 59,979; male perpetrators: 31,499; female perpetrators: 28,450.

Neglect was the most frequent type of maltreatment committed, as presented in Table 4-11. Slightly more than one-half (52.4 percent) of the perpetrators of neglect were female, while the remaining perpetrators (47.6 percent) were male. Emotional/psychological abuse was the second most frequent type of maltreatment. Data show that just over one-half of the perpetrators were male (60.1 percent) while the remainder were female (39.9 percent). Financial/material exploitation was the next most frequent type of abuse perpetrated. Perpetrators of this type of abuse were approximately 60 percent male, while the remaining were females. Almost two-thirds of the perpetrators of physical abuse were males (62.6 percent) while the remaining one-third (37.5 percent) were females. Abandonment was predominately perpetrated by males (83.4%) while the remainder was females. Interestingly, neglect is the only type of maltreatment that was committed with approximately equal frequency by females and males. For the remainder of the maltreatment types, males clearly were more likely to commit abuse and neglect.

Table 4-11. Sex of perpetrators of domestic elder abuse for selected types of maltreatment¹

Sex	Neglect	Emotional/ Psychological	Physical abuse	Financial/ material	Abandonment
Male	47.6%	60.1%	62.6%	59.0%	83.4%
Female	52.4%	39.9%	37.4%	41.0%	16.6%*
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of victims experiencing abuse.	47.4%	35.8%	27.0%	30.8%	4.2%*

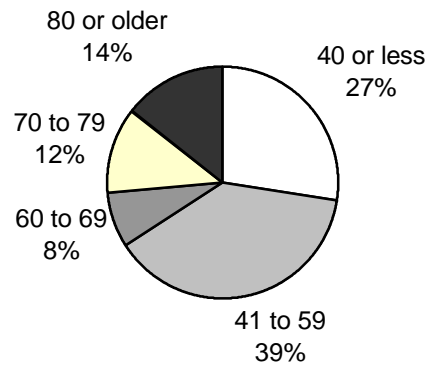
¹ Based on an estimated 59,672 substantiated incidents of elder abuse. Some entries have missing values.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Ages of Perpetrators of Domestic Elder Abuse

The distribution of perpetrators of domestic abuse by age is shown in Figure 4-7 on the next page. The majority of elder abuse perpetrators were younger than 60 years of age. Approximately two-thirds (65.8 percent) of the perpetrators of elder abuse were persons who were 59 years old and younger, while approximately 25 percent of the perpetrators were persons who were 70 and older. In addition, slightly less than 10 percent of the perpetrators were between the ages of 60 and 69.

Figure 4-7. Ages of perpetrators of domestic elder abuse



The ages of the perpetrators of domestic elder abuse reveal an interesting relationship. The majority of perpetrators, as shown above, are in the youngest age groups; however, there is a relatively large proportion of perpetrators in the oldest age group. This relationship becomes more visible when the ages of perpetrators are examined for selected types of maltreatment. Table 4-12 presents this relationship.

Table 4-12. Age of perpetrators of domestic elder abuse for selected types of maltreatment¹

Age	Neglect	Emotional/ Psychological	Physical abuse	Financial/ material	Abandonment
40 and under	20.1%	34.3%	20.3%	45.1%	1.4% *
41 to 59	34.2%	42.4%	41.9%	39.5%	67.5%
60 to 69	9.2% *	10.4% *	8.1% *	3.4% *	0.0% *
70 to 79	18.9% *	4.8% *	12.4% *	1.6% *	1.5% *
80/older	17.7%	8.2%	17.4% *	10.4% *	29.6% *
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of victims experiencing abuse	48.5%	34.8%	26.9% *	30.2% *	4.3% *

¹ Based on an estimated 57,933 substantiated incidents of elder abuse. Some entries have missing values.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

For the majority of maltreatment types, the perpetrators are concentrated in two age groups--those younger than age 40 and those older than age 80. However, when the specific age groups are examined by type of abuse, no two types follow the same pattern. Perpetrators of neglect were relatively evenly distributed across all age groups. Approximately one-fifth (20.1 percent) of the perpetrators of neglect were younger than age 40, while one-third (34.2 percent) of the perpetrators were between the ages of 41 and 59. It is worth noting that confidence bands are such that values may not be much greater than zero for all except these two age groups. A small proportion (9.2 percent) of the perpetrators of neglect was between the ages of 60 and 69. Further, the age groups of 70 to 79 and 80 and older each had nearly one-fifth of the perpetrators (70 to 79, with 18.9 percent; 80 and older with 17.7 percent).

Perpetrators of emotional/psychological abuse were concentrated among the younger age groups. Approximately one-third (34.3 percent) of the perpetrators of emotional/psychological abuse were younger than age 40 and 42.4 percent of the perpetrators were between the ages of 41 and 59. Again, it is only the younger age groups for which the data are significant. A small proportion (10.4 percent) of the perpetrators of emotional/psychological abuse was between the ages of 60 and 69. The proportions of perpetrators of emotional/psychological abuse in other age categories were very small. Of the perpetrators of physical abuse, 41.9 percent were between the ages of 41 and 59. An additional 20.3 percent were in the youngest age category—younger than 40. A small proportion of perpetrators of physical abuse was between the ages of 60 and 69, while 12.4 percent of the perpetrators were between the ages of 70 and 79. Last, 17.4 percent of the perpetrators of physical abuse were older than 80 years of age.

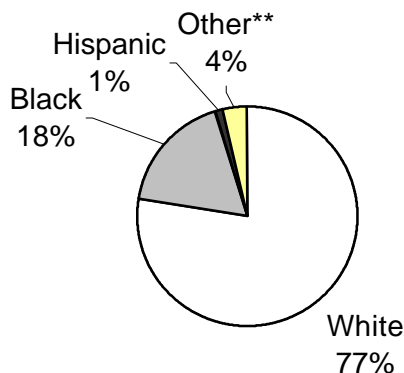
Perpetrators of financial/material exploitation were generally concentrated in the youngest age categories. Approximately 45 percent of the perpetrators were below the age of 40, while an additional 39.5 percent of the perpetrators were between the ages of 41 and 59. In addition, 3.5 percent of the perpetrators of financial/material exploitation were between the ages of 60 and 69, and 1.6 percent of the perpetrators were between the ages of 70 and 79. Last, 10.4 of the perpetrators were older than 80 years of age. For the older age groups of perpetrators, those older than 60, confidence bands are wide and values may not differ significantly from zero. Perpetrators of abandonment accounted for only 4.3

percent of all perpetrators of elder abuse. Approximately two-thirds (67.5 percent) of the abandonment perpetrators were between the ages of 41 and 59, while the remainder were older than 80 years of age. The age categories of less than 40 and 70 to 79 each comprised about 1.5 percent of the perpetrators of abandonment.

Race/Ethnicity of Perpetrators of Domestic Elder Abuse

Approximately three-fourths (77.4 percent) of elder abuse perpetrators in the substantiated cases in 1996 were white, and somewhat less than one-fifth (17.9 percent) were black, as shown below in Figure 4-8; however, only small percentages of persons from other racial/ethnic groups were represented among the perpetrators of elder maltreatment.

Figure 4-8. Race/ethnicity of perpetrators of domestic elder abuse*



*Based on an estimated 44,168 substantiated incidents of elder abuse.

**Includes American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, and other/unknown.

Table 4-13 on the next page presents the race/ethnicity of perpetrators of domestic elder abuse for selected types of maltreatment. White perpetrators account for 76.6 percent of the perpetrators of neglect, while 20.4 percent of the perpetrators of neglect were black. Percentages of perpetrators of neglect from other racial/ethnic groups were very small, as shown in the table.

Table 4-13. Race/ethnicity of perpetrators of domestic elder abuse for selected types of maltreatment¹

Race/ Ethnicity	Neglect	Emotional/ Psychological	Physical abuse	Financial/ material	Abandonment
White	76.6%	77.3%	83.0%	77.1%	34.4%*
Black	20.4%	17.8%*	11.3%*	18.7%*	59.0%*
Hispanic	0.8%*	0.8%*	1.4%*	0.8%*	1.4%*
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.3%*	0.5%*	0.3%*	0.2%*	0.0%*
Am. Indian/ Alaskan Native	0.1%*	0.0%*	0.1%*	1.5%*	0.0%*
Other/unknown	1.9%*	3.6%*	3.8%*	1.7%*	5.2%*
Percentage of total perpetrators	47.5%	35.4%	26.9%	31.0%	4.2%*

¹ Based on an estimated 59,517 substantiated incidents of elder abuse. Some entries have missing values.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

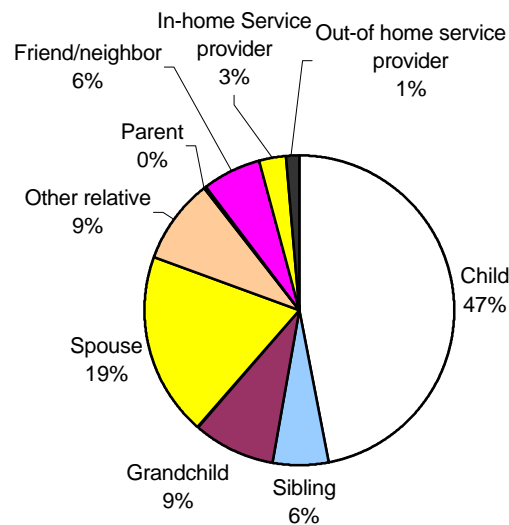
Emotional/psychological abuse was the second most frequent type of elder maltreatment, with 35.4 percent of perpetrators involved with it. Over three-quarters (77.3 percent) of the perpetrators of this type of maltreatment were white, while 17.8 percent were black. Once again, percentages of perpetrators of emotional/psychological abuse from other racial/ethnic groups were very small. Financial/material exploitation was the next most frequent type of maltreatment under this analysis. The proportion of white perpetrators in this type of elder maltreatment was 77.1 percent. About 19 percent of the perpetrators of emotional/psychological abuse were black, and the perpetrators from other racial/ethnic populations were greatly underrepresented among the perpetrators of financial/material exploitation.

Of the perpetrators of physical abuse, 83.0 percent were white, while black perpetrators accounted for 11.3 percent. The remaining racial/ethnic groups all comprised less than 5 percent of the perpetrators. Perpetrators of abandonment accounted for only 4.2 percent of all perpetrators of elder abuse. Just over one-half (59.0 percent) of the abandonment perpetrators were black, while one-third of the perpetrators (34.4 percent) were white. Hispanic elders accounted for 1.4 percent of the victims of abandonment. Because of the high standard errors, the data overall should be regarded as tentative.

Relationship of Perpetrators to Victims of Domestic Elder Abuse

The largest category of perpetrators (47.3 percent) of the substantiated incidents of elder abuse was the adult children of the victims. Spouses represented the second largest group of perpetrators comprising 19.3 percent. In addition, other relatives were the third most frequent category of perpetrators (8.8 percent), with grandchildren following closely (8.6 percent).

Figure 4-9. Relationship of perpetrators to victims of domestic abuse



When the relationship of perpetrator of domestic elder abuse to victim is examined by type of abuse, it is apparent that children are the most likely perpetrators of all types of maltreatment. Neglect is the most frequent type of maltreatment, and children accounted for 43.2 percent of the perpetrators. Spouses were the next category most likely to neglect victims (30.3 percent). Siblings and grandchildren each represented about 9 percent of the perpetrators of neglect. The remainder of the categories of perpetrators all represented less than 5 percent of the perpetrators of neglect.

Perpetrators of emotional/psychological abuse were again most likely to be the children of the victim (53.9 percent) followed by the victim's spouse (12.6 percent). Other relatives and friends/neighbors were almost equally as likely to be perpetrators of emotional/psychological abuse (11.7 and 10.3 percent respectively). Grandchildren comprised 8.9 percent of the perpetrators of

emotional/psychological abuse. The remainder of the perpetrators all represented less than 1 percent. Physical abuse was most likely to be committed by adult children (48.6 percent) of the victims of domestic elder abuse. The victim's spouse was the next most likely perpetrator of abuse (23.4 percent), and friends/neighbors represented one-tenth of the perpetrators of physical abuse (10.2 percent).

Perpetrators of financial/material exploitation were, again, most likely to be the adult children (60.4 percent). The victim's other relative, grandchild, and friends/neighbors were almost equally as likely to be perpetrators of financial/material exploitation (9.7 percent, 9.2 percent, and 8.7 percent respectively). The remainder of perpetrators all represented less than 5 percent of the perpetrators of neglect. Perpetrators of abandonment were related to victims of domestic elder abuse in four ways. The perpetrators were the adult children (79.5 percent), in-home service providers (7.4 percent), grandchildren (6.6 percent), and other relatives (6.4 percent). The confidence bands for estimates of most categories of perpetrators (other than children) were too wide to be confident that they are much greater than zero, however. Table 4-14 summarizes these findings.

Table 4-14. Relationship of perpetrators to victims of domestic elder abuse for selected types of maltreatment¹

Income Category	Neglect	Emotional/ Psychological	Physical abuse	Financial/ material	Abandonment
Child	43.2%	53.9%	48.6%	60.4%	79.5%*
Sibling	8.7%*	1.8%*	4.7%*	1.3%*	0.0%
Grandchild	8.8%*	8.9%*	5.6%*	9.2%*	6.6%*
Parent	0.5%*	0.0%*	0.8%*	0.0%*	0.0%*
Spouse	30.3%*	12.6%	23.4%	4.9%*	6.4%*
Other relative	3.7%*	11.7%*	5.4%*	9.7%*	0.0%*
Friend/neighbor	0.6%*	10.3%	10.2%	8.7%*	0.0%*
In-home service provider	4.2%*	0.9%*	0.2%*	1.7%*	7.4%*
Out-of-home service provider	0.0%*	0.0%*	1.2%*	4.1%*	0.0%*
Percentage of total perpetrators	47.8%	36.1%	26.9%	30.4%	4.2%*

¹ Based on an estimated 59,218 substantiated incidents of elder abuse. Some entries have missing values.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

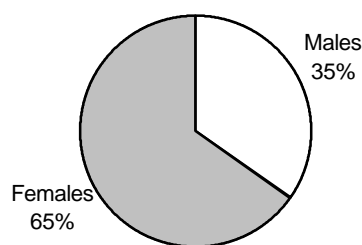
The nature of caregiving relationships among family members is an important and complex issue with regard to the perpetrators of elder abuse and neglect. The NEAIS was not able to explore this issue, however, due to the type and scope of data being gathered by the APS workers and sentinels. While a broad range of information was collected through interviews and observations, more in-depth interviews with both the abused or neglected elders and their family members and caregivers, which are necessary to appropriately explore caregiving relationships, were not included in the design of the NEAIS. This is certainly an area worthy of a future study that is specifically designed and conducted to gather such interview and case study data.

4.3.2 Characteristics of Self-Neglecting Elders

Sex of Self-Neglecting Elders

The data on the substantiated incidents of self-neglect reveal that approximately two-thirds of the self-neglecting elders were female, while one-third were male, as shown below in Figure 4-10. This is somewhat higher than the 58 percent representation of females in the total elderly population.

Figure 4-10. Sex of self-neglecting elders*



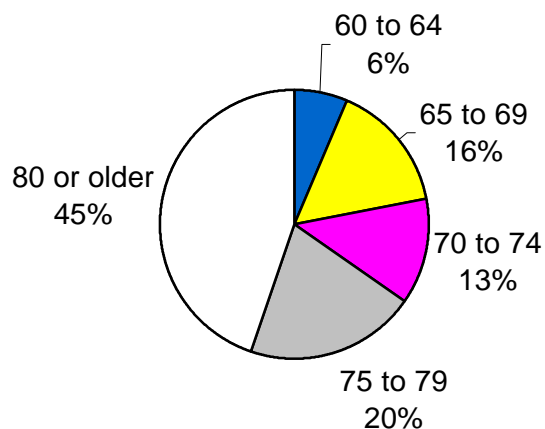
Males, 15,341; females, 28,827

*Based on an estimated 44,168 substantiated incidents of elder abuse.

Age of Self-Neglecting Elders

The largest proportions of self-neglecting elders are in the oldest age category (80 and older), as the data on the substantiated incidents of self-neglect indicate. As shown in Figure 4-11, slightly less than one-half (44.7 percent) of the self-neglecting elders were age 80 and older, compared with only six percent who were between 60 and 64 years old. This disparity is strengthened when the age breakdown of self-neglecting elders is compared with the age breakdown of the elderly population in general. For each of the first three age categories (i.e., 60-64, 65-69, and 70-74), self-neglecting elders are under-represented. For example, while 60 to 64 year olds comprise 23 percent of the elderly population, they are only 6 percent of self-neglecting elders. This pattern of under-representation changes with the 75 to 79 year olds, which make up 16 percent of the elderly population, but are 20 percent of self-neglecting elders. The starkest, yet predictable finding was that elders aged 80 or older, who comprise 19 percent of the elder population, make-up 45 percent of self-neglecting elders. The older an elderly person gets, the more likely it is that she/he will be self-neglecting.

Figure 4-11. Age of self-neglecting elders*

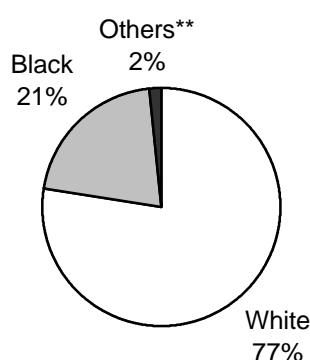


*Based on an estimated 44,168 substantiated incidents of elder abuse.

Race/Ethnicity of Self-Neglecting Elders

Figure 4-12 shows that self-neglecting elders fell predominately into three racial/ethnic groups. Approximately three-quarters (77.4 percent) of the self-neglecting elders were white. Black self-neglecting elders accounted for 20.9 percent of this population, while American Indians/Alaskan Natives and others accounted for 1.7 percent. It should be noted that, because of the large standard errors for this variable, the findings presented below should be regarded as tentative.

Figure 4-12. Race/ethnicity of self-neglecting elders*



*Based on the 44,168 estimated substantiated incidents of elder abuse for which the necessary information was available.

**Includes American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1.1%; other/unknown, 0.6%; Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Islander categories were not represented

Self Care Ability of Self-Neglecting Elders

An extremely high proportion (93.4 percent) of elders with substantiated self-neglect has some difficulty caring for themselves, with one-third overall not being able to care for themselves. Six out of ten were only somewhat able to care for themselves. Only five percent were judged as able to care for themselves. These data, shown in Table 4-15, strongly confirm the extremely high, almost totally overlapping, relationship between self-neglect and inability to care for one self.

Table 4-15. Self-Neglecting Elders -- Ability to Care for Self Physically (APS)¹

Characteristics of Maltreated Elders	Number of Estimated Reports	Percentage
Not Able to Care for Self	14,925	34.3
Somewhat Able to Care for Self	25,708	59.0
Able to Care for Self	2,149	4.9*
Don't Know, Cannot Determine	762*	1.8*

¹This table is based on an estimated 43,544 substantiated incidents of self-neglect. Some entries have missing values.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Confusion of Self-Neglecting Elders

Three quarters of substantiated self-neglecting elders suffer from some degree of confusion. Three out of ten such elders are very confused or disoriented, while another 45.4 percent are sometimes confused. Approximately one quarter (23.6 percent) is not confused and appears to be aware of their actions.

Table 4-16. Self-Neglecting Elders -- Confusion (APS)¹

Characteristics of Maltreated Elders	Number of Estimated Reports	Percentage
Not Confused	9,815*	23.6
Sometimes Confused	18,890	45.4
Very Confused, Disoriented	12,455	29.9
Don't Know, Cannot Determine	498*	1.2*

¹This table is based on an estimated 41,659 substantiated incidents of self-neglect. Some entries have missing values.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Depression of Self-Neglecting Elders

In 28.4 percent of the incidents of substantiated self-neglect, the APS agency was not able to determine whether depression was present or not. Over half (53.9 percent) of the self-neglecting elders were assessed to not be depressed, while 14.7 percent were judged as moderately depressed. Only a relatively small proportion (3.1 percent) was severely depressed.

Table 4-17. Self-Neglecting Elders – Depression (APS)¹

Characteristics of Maltreated Elders	Number of Estimated Reports	Percentage
Not Depressed	23,387	53.9
Moderate Depression	6,366	14.7
Severe Depression	1,333*	3.1*
Don't Know, Cannot Determine	12,335	28.4

¹This table is based on an estimated 43,421 substantiated incidents of self-neglect. Some entries have missing values.

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

4.4 Abuse and Neglect Reported by Sentinel Agencies

Characteristics of Elderly Victims of Non-Reported Abuse and Neglect

Overall, sentinels submitted 201 data forms describing incidents they observed during their daily work activities. Sentinels were carefully trained to complete forms only for events that met study definitions and conformed to specific signs and symptoms. Of these 201 incidents, two different sentinels reported four, and 57 were also reported to APS agencies. The duplicate incidents were assigned to APS agencies leaving 140 incidents reported only by sentinels. These 140 reports were weighted to provide national, annualized estimates of unreported abuse, neglect, and/or self-neglect which extrapolated to 435,901 new unduplicated incidents during 1996.

The following tables present data on types of abuse and neglect by age, minority group status, gender, and according to physical and mental frailty for incidents reported by the 1,158 sentinels in the study counties. Although the weighted numbers estimated from the forms that were collected are relatively large, they are based on a small number of actual reports. Consequently, only two or three descriptive categories are presented in the tables below. These small numbers also result in large standard errors for many values.

Age. Of the three age categories shown in Table 4-18, the oldest old (those over 80) were most likely to suffer from neglect. Sixty percent of the neglected elderly were 80 years or older compared to their being 19 percent of the total elderly population (i.e., four times their proportion of the total elderly population). Elders aged 80 and over also are over represented in self-neglect and financial exploitation. Several forms of abuse and neglect were more commonly experienced by the youngest elderly, aged 60 to

70. Physical abuse was particularly noteworthy, with 60-70 year olds comprising almost 70 percent despite being only approximately 45 percent of the elderly population. This age group is also slightly over represented in financial and emotional abuse. Given the large standard errors, however, these estimates should be considered tentative.

Table 4-18. Type of abuse by age: Percentages (Sentinel)

Type of abuse	Age			Total
	60-70	71-80	80+	
Physical	69.0*	10.1*	20.1*	100%
Emotional	47.2*	30.2	21.9	100%
Financial	49.3*	24.3*	25.3*	100%
Neglect	23.5*	25.6*	60.0	100%
Abandonment	.88*	39.1*	6.0*	100%
Self-neglect	35.7	28.9*	35.5	100%

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Race/Ethnicity. The data do not show that rates of unreported abuse and neglect are higher in nonminority communities than among minorities. Blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities were combined into one category in Table 4-19 (on the next page) because of the small numbers of reports received about these groups. Altogether, across the counties in the sample, the Census Bureau classified 15.5 percent of the population as minority in 1990. Given the relatively high rate of increase in minorities throughout the United States since 1990, there is no reason to expect this average percentage to have declined substantially in the study counties or, indeed, at all. If minorities were represented proportionately in sentinel reports of abuse and neglect, rates of abuse across all categories should be close to 15.5. For all five types of abuse and neglect with known perpetrators, the proportion of minority victims identified by sentinels ranged between 3.6 and 7.6 percent, whereas the proportion of nonminority victims was always greater than 90 percent. Figures for nonminorities have small confidence bands.

Table 4-19. Type of abuse, by minority status: Percentages (Sentinel)

Type of Abuse	Minority status	
	Minority	Nonminority
Physical	3.9*	96.1
Emotional	4.1*	95.9
Financial	7.6*	92.4
Neglect	3.6*	96.4
Abandonment	5.4*	94.6
Self-neglect	12.1*	88.1

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Gender. When the data are examined by category of abuse, a majority of victims of all types of abuse were women. Over 80 percent of the physical abuse recognized by sentinels, over 90 percent of the financial abuse, over 70 percent of the emotional/psychological abuse, and over 65 percent of neglect cases were found among women rather than men, as shown in Table 4-20. This is a high level of over-representation by women, who comprised only 58 percent of the total elderly population in 1996. Although rates of abandonment have wide confidence bands, they also show higher proportions of women than men do. Cases of self-neglect are more nearly divided exactly as men and women comprised the total elderly population.

Table 4-20. Type of abuse, by gender: Percentages (Sentinel)

Type of abuse	Gender		
	Female	Male	Total
Physical	83.2	16.9*	100%
Emotional	72.7	27.3	100%
Financial	91.8	8.2*	100%
Neglect	67.2	32.8	100%
Abandonment	65.4*	34.6*	100%
Self-neglect	57.0	43.0	100%

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Income. The sentinel data form asked for an estimate of the income of the maltreated elder and spouse (if any). Sentinels had sufficient information to make this estimate in only a small number of reports, and therefore reliable national estimates could not be made. Sentinels were reporting only initial information and observations, as compared with more in-depth information gathered during an APS worker's investigation of abuse or neglect, which allowed APS workers to estimate income 71 percent of the time. Sentinels also had less experience than APS reporters did in making income estimates based on partial information, for example about Social Security benefits and other complex pension arrangements. It is not surprising, therefore, that income estimates from sentinels were not feasible. The economic condition of victims of elder abuse and neglect is an important issue and is worthy of future research that will specifically gather reliable income and financial resource data.

Physical and Mental Frailty

Sentinel reporters were trained to identify the level of depression and confusion of elderly victims, where appropriate, as well as their ability to care for themselves. Many professionals in contact with elderly clients are accustomed to paying attention to limitations in abilities to perform activities of daily living, and to look for signs of confusion and depression. Along any particular dimension of frailty, people may not show evidence of symptoms at all times. It may be necessary to observe a person for a considerable period of time or to ask specific questions to determine the presence of symptoms. Sentinels were asked only to report on what they observed, and not to ask probing questions. They also were asked to indicate when they were not able to determine the presence of symptoms by answering "don't know."

Depression is probably the most difficult of the three characteristics to diagnose by observation only, since a relatively long term, underlying mood may not be manifested in outward behavior. It has been reported that the proportion of elders believed to be depressed ranges from 9.6 to 12.6 percent.³ Not surprisingly, approximately a third of the time the sentinels in our study were unable to judge whether the person they suspected to be abused seemed depressed.

³ Cynthia Thomas, et al., "Depressive Symptoms and Mortality in Elderly People," *Journal of Gerontology, Social Sciences* 1992, Vol. 47, Number 2, 580-87.

Self-Care Ability. Sentinels were given three choices of descriptors of an alleged victim’s ability to care for himself. Persons could be described as “able to care for self,” “somewhat able to care for self,” or “not able to care for self.” Sentinels were unable to make one of these choices 14 percent of the time. Half of all persons (51.9 percent) were described either as somewhat able or not able to take care of physical needs. Only a third of all persons appeared to be able to take care of themselves (33.8 percent). See table 4-21. This suggests a high rate of physical frailty among these victims.

Table 4-21. Ability to Care for Self Physically (Sentinel)

Characteristics of Maltreated Elder	Number of Estimated Report	Percentages
Not Able To Care For Self	81,981	18.8%*
Somewhat Able To Care For Self	144,432	33.1%
Able to Care For Self	147,446	33.8%*
Don’t Know, Cannot Determine	62,042	14.2%*

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Confusion. Brief mental impairment tests often are required to assess whether elderly people are able to perform mental activities at an appropriate level of competence. Older persons often can compensate for minor difficulties, or conceal problems in the early stages of impairment. Furthermore, mental impairments may not manifest themselves in all situations. Sentinels were asked to look for “confusion” rather than to diagnose an “impairment,” since such a diagnosis would require testing. Sentinels were unable to assess whether or not persons were confused for only 18 percent of their observations. Nearly half (45.5 percent) of the persons they reported to us were described as “sometimes” or “very” confused. Only a third of the time (36.6 percent) did sentinels indicate that no confusion appeared to be present. (See Table 4-22 on the next page.) This represents an extremely high rate of potential mental impairment among this group of older people.

Table 4-22. Confusion (Sentinel)

Characteristics of Maltreated Elder	Number of Estimated Reports	Percentages
Not Confused	159,498*	36.6%
Sometimes Confused	165,232	37.9%
Very Confused, Disoriented	32,777	7.5%
Don't Know, Cannot Determine	78,394	18.0%

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Depression. Sentinels were asked to observe whether the victims they reported to us appeared to be experiencing “severe depression,” “moderate depression,” or seemed “not depressed.” As noted above, they were unable to determine whether depression was present in a third of the cases they saw. Nearly half of the elders (46.9 percent), however, seemed to be depressed to some extent (46.9 percent). Only 20 percent showed no signs of depression in the presence of the sentinel. See Table 4-23.

Table 4-23. Depression (Sentinel)

Characteristics of Maltreated Elder	Number of Estimated Reports	Percentage
Not Depressed	87,315	20.0%
Moderate Depression	180,278	41.4%
Severe Depression	24,036*	5.5%*
Don't Know, Cannot Determine	144,273	33.1%

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Signs of Physical and Mental Frailty for Specific Forms of Abuse and Neglect

Tables 4-24 through 4-26 present information on self care ability, confusion and depression across all six categories of reported abuse and neglect. Because the number of cases in any one category is small, resulting in large standard errors, these estimates need to be considered altogether according to

the patterns they display, rather than by each single measure. The numbers are discussed here according to whether there is any apparent indication of frailty, or not, for each type of abuse or neglect.

Self-Care Ability. Cases of self neglect are often difficult to classify, since, strictly speaking, an individual believed to have the physical and mental resources to manage his own personal care was not defined by the study as self-neglectful. Persons experiencing neglect, abandonment, and self-neglect were most often reported as not able or only somewhat able to take care of themselves. Very few of those classified as self-neglecting were reported to be physically independent (11.2 percent). Two-thirds of those alleged to have been physically abused were thought to have the ability to care for themselves, suggesting that such abuse is not just perpetrated on the very weakest persons. Somewhat around half of those facing financial or emotional abuse were considered able to take physical care of themselves. Standard errors are large for most categories. See Table 4-24.

Table 4-24. Ability to Care for Self Physically by Type of Abuse (Sentinel)

Forms of Abuse	Not Able to Care For Self	Somewhat Able To Care For Self	Able to Care for Self	Don't Know, Cannot Determine
Physical	16.1%*	12.6%*	67.6%*	3.8%*
Emotional	17.8%*	26.3%	40.7%*	15.3%*
Financial	23.5%*	19.9%*	52.9%*	3.8%*
Neglect	47.7%*	26.8%*	1.4%*	24.2%*
Abandonment	64.9%*	35.1%*	0.0%	0.0%
Self-Neglect	26.2%*	60.2%	11.2%*	2.4%*

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Confusion. Confusion was most common among those who experienced neglect, abandonment, and self-neglect. Very few of those who were abandoned were free from confusion (only 1.3 percent). Only 7 percent of those reported to have been neglected, and 20 percent of persons who were victims of self-neglect evidenced no signs of confusion. Most of those who were reported to have been physically abused (66.8 percent) did not appear to be confused. Half of those subjected to financial

abuse, however, were thought to be confused at least some of the time. Standard errors for most table values are large. (See Table 4-25).

Table 4-25. Confusion by Type of Abuse (Sentinel)

Forms of Abuse	Not Confused	Sometimes Confused	Very Confused, Disoriented	Don't Know, Cannot Determine
Physical	66.8%*	10.0%*	14.6%*	8.7%*
Emotional	43.8%*	34.5%*	3.3%*	18.5%*
Financial	51.7%*	33.4%*	11.9%*	3.1%*
Neglect	7.1%*	46.8%	21.7%*	24.4%*
Abandonment	1.3%*	34.6%*	64.0%*	0.0%
Self-Neglect	19.5%	68.8%	2.1%*	9.6%*

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Depression. Rates of signs and symptoms of depression were high across all forms of abuse and neglect, but standard errors were large for all except two categories. Among those who were abandoned, only 1.3 percent was seen as moderately depressed; however, no determination could be made as to depression status for nearly two-thirds of them. Except for abandonment, between 35 and 70 percent of alleged victims of abuse were believed to show signs of moderate or severe depression. In only 11 – 35 percent of instances were sentinels able to say that they did not think the victim of abuse was depressed. (See Table 4-26).

Table 4-26. Depression by Type of Abuse (Sentinel)

Forms of Abuse	Not Depressed	Moderate Depression	Severe Depression	Don't Know, Cannot Determine
Physical	11.1%*	62.9%*	0.8%*	25.2%*
Emotional	22.7%	46.1%*	7.0%*	24.2%*
Financial	10.8%*	61.4%*	8.5%*	19.3%*
Neglect	21.0%*	20.3%*	12.4%*	46.3%
Abandonment	34.6%*	1.3%*	0.0%	64.0%
Self-Neglect	18.5%*	52.8%	4.6%*	24.0%

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Characteristics of Perpetrators of Abuse and Neglect Reported by Sentinels

Approximately 85 percent of incidents of abuse and neglect reported by sentinels had one or more alleged perpetrators (10.4 percent had more than one perpetrator). Sentinels were asked to supply information about the sex, age, and ethnicity of the person(s) alleged to have committed the abuse, as well as the relationship to the victim. Sentinels did not always have complete information about the suspected perpetrator. They were most likely to be able to identify the relationship of the person alleged as the abuser, which they did for all but .6 percent of the instances, and least likely to report age (10.8 percent), according to the weighted numbers. Tables 4-27 and 4-28 present information about the characteristics of these alleged perpetrators. Although standard errors are large so that many absolute values of percentages are not reliable, the rank order of characteristics is of interest.

As shown in Table 4-27, family members accounted for most of the suspected perpetrators, with spouses (30.3 percent), children (30.8 percent), and parents (24.0 percent) representing 85 percent. Although the percentage of alleged parental perpetrators is relatively large, at 24 percent, the confidence band is wide, indicating that this estimate is unreliable. Table 4-28 shows that only 29 percent of perpetrators with known ages (11 percent of ages are unknown) were at least 60 years old and over. (This percentage also has a wide confidence band.) Since parents are likely to be at least 15 years older than their children are, these numbers together suggest that very few parents are likely to have perpetrated abuse or neglect.

In small proportions of cases, siblings and grandchildren were involved. Friends, neighbors, and service providers in the home were believed to be responsible 10 percent of the time. Data reported for most individual categories of people alleged as abusers have large standard errors. Children, however, accounted for a significant proportion of alleged abusers, at 30.8 percent.

Table 4-27. Relationship of alleged perpetrators of abuse for sentinel data

Relationship	Percentage
Child	30.8
Spouse	30.3*
Parent	24.0*
Friend/Neighbor	5.7*
Grandchild	4.2*
Service Provider	4.2*
Sibling	.3*
Not determined	.6*

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

The most common age range for perpetrators was the middle years (ages 36 to 59), which accounted for 45.4 percent of perpetrators, with close to 30 percent being age 60 and over, and 15 percent under age 35, as shown in Table 4-28. Age was not known 10 percent of the time. Nearly twice as many were reported perpetrators were men as women (63 percent versus 35 percent). Approximately two-thirds of the perpetrators were identified as nonminorities.

Table 4-28. Characteristics of alleged perpetrators of abuse for sentinel data

Age	Percentage
35 and under	15.3*
36-59	45.4
60 and over	28.6*
Not determined	10.8*
Sex	Percentage
Male	63.1
Female	35.4
Not determined	1.5*
Ethnicity	Percentage
Minority	36.5*
Nonminority	63.5

*The confidence band for these numbers is wide, relative to the size of the estimate. The true number may be close to zero or much larger than the estimate.

Sentinel reports represent nearly 80 percent of the total number of incidents, nationwide (and would represent an even higher proportion, if the duplicates had been “assigned” to sentinels rather than to APS). However, specific characteristics of victims and of perpetrators often have large confidence bands due to the relatively small number of events upon which the estimates were based. Nonetheless, these results complement and support the data supplied by APS.